

Re: **MANURE SPREADING ADVISORY #1 - 2008: SOUTH COASTAL REGION**

**Date: January 28, 2008**

The following advisory is produced by government, in partnership with industry, to provide guidance to farmers regarding the *Agricultural Waste Control Regulation* and the *ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT*. If a discrepancy arises between this document and the legislation, the legislation takes precedence. Following this advisory does not relieve anyone from their obligations under the LEGISLATION. The Province of British Columbia does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information referenced here from legislation, and in no event is the Province liable or responsible for damages of any kind arising out of its use.

**Manure application on any crops is not advised. Soils are now frozen throughout much of the Fraser Valley with snow in the long range forecast, particularly for central and eastern sections. Manure application on frozen ground followed by significant precipitation would present a very high risk of pollution occurring from runoff.**

**Please read the entire advisory as it contains important information to assist producers with decision-making about manure application.**

**Producers are responsible for decisions regarding manure spreading. Legislation does not give specific dates for manure spreading, but allows for the use of manure as a fertilizer, and does not allow for manure to be spread in a manner that causes pollution.**

**The “Manure Spreading Advisory Committee” (consisting of industry and government representatives) will be monitoring weather and soil conditions and will issue further advisories as considered necessary.**

**Current Conditions:**

**Weather:** Cool conditions continuing with heavy frost each night with some snow and rain in the 5 day forecast. The long range outlook shows temperatures continuing below normal.

**Soil:** Soil moisture ranges from moist to saturated.

**Crops:** Dormant

### **Environmental Risks from Manure Application:**

The principal environmental risks associated with manure application at this time are:

- surface runoff of manure nutrients and pathogens to water courses during subsequent precipitation events
- short-circuit flow of manure nutrients and pathogens to water courses through drain-tiles.
- soil compaction from operating heavy equipment on fields that are very wet, particularly if not frozen.

Given the above risks, the “Manure Spreading Advisory Committee” (consisting of industry and government representatives) is not yet advising any manure application but will continue monitoring conditions and will issue further advisories as conditions improve.

**Producers are responsible for decisions regarding manure spreading.** Legislation does not give specific dates for manure spreading, but allows for the use of manure as a fertilizer, and does not allow for manure to be spread in a manner that causes pollution. This is a good time for farmers to be walking their fields and assessing crop and soil conditions. This way, they will know which fields will be the first ones suitable for manure application when conditions improve.

**Avoiding Overflowing Manure Pits:** Some producers may be faced with potentially overflowing manure pits. Allowing any uncontrolled release of manure is likely a contravention of the Environmental Management Act. Until field conditions are suitable for manure application, producers are strongly advised to identify temporary alternatives, including neighbours who may have extra capacity in their manure storage facilities. If all else fails, contact the **Ministry of Agriculture and Lands** or the **Ministry of Environment** (contact info below) for further advice.

Further information for specific crops is provided below:

### **Perennial Grassland and Well-Established Cover Crops**

Manure application is not advised at this time. However, as soil and crop conditions improve, consider the following recommendations:

- only apply manure when soil is trafficable and there is no significant rain forecast for the next 5 days
- apply at rates matched to crop nutrient requirements (suggested maximum rate of 60 kg/ha of manure nitrogen which is equivalent to about 2000 gal/ac with liquid dairy manure)
- maintain adequate setbacks to watercourses to avoid runoff (at this time of year, suggested minimum setback distance is 10 metres (33 feet), depending on a variety of factors including weather, topography, soil conditions and rate of application)
- do not apply manure to tile-drained fields, particularly if water is currently flowing through the drain tiles
- do not apply manure to areas of fields that are frozen or saturated
- do not apply manure to areas of fields that are subject to flooding or runoff

**Bare land and Berry Crops:**

No manure application is recommended at this time.

**Additional Resources:**

**Canada-BC Environmental Farm Plan Program:**

Trained Planning Advisors are available to assist producers with completing an Environmental Farm Plan. Some of the delivery groups and their contacts for the Coastal Region are mentioned below:

- BC Milk Producers' Association <http://www.bcmilkproducers.ca/>, Dave Melnychuk, 604-534-2639
- Mainland Fruit and Vegetables EFP Delivery Group, Jyl Singh 604-807-5659
- Poultry Administration, Allen James, 604-795-7656

A complete contact list is available through the BC Agriculture Council website at the link below:

[http://www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP\\_pages/contact\\_us/index.html](http://www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP_pages/contact_us/index.html)

**Agricultural Waste Control Regulation:**

This is the actual legislation that applies to manure management in British Columbia.

[http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/E/EnvMgmt/131\\_92.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/E/EnvMgmt/131_92.htm)

For further information, please contact:

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Orlando Schmidt, PAg 604-556-3101

Geoff Hughes-Games, PAg 604-556-3102

For questions of a regulatory nature, please contact:

BC Ministry of Environment

Trevor Hamelin, AScT 604 582-5275